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MARSEILLES NABISCO BRIDGE  
I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor  
Crossing power canals at Nabisco  
paper mill site, Main Street and  
Illinois River  
Marseilles  
LaSalle County  
Illinois

HAER No. IL-97

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 37127  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING  
MARSEILLES NABISCO BRIDGE  
I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor

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**Location:** I & M Canal National Heritage Corridor  
Crossing power canals at Nabisco paper  
mill site, Main Street and Illinois  
River  
Marseilles, LaSalle County, Illinois

UTM: 16 E.356780 N.4576160  
Quad: Marseilles

**Date of Construction:** 1888, 1910, ca. 1950

**Builder:** 1888, Lassing Bridge Company

**Present Owner:** Unknown

**Present Use:** Unknown

**Significance:** One of the oldest bridges in the  
Heritage Corridor, this single span Howe  
truss carries a spur of the Rock Island  
Railroad across the Marseilles power  
canal into the Nabisco Carton Factory.  
The use of the Howe truss for railroad  
bridges was increasingly uncommon for  
such late-nineteenth century metal  
bridges.

**Project Information:** The Illinois and Michigan Canal was  
designated a National Heritage Corridor  
in 1984. The following year HABS/HAER  
embarked on an extensive inventory and  
documentation project of the 100 mile-  
long corridor. Field work for this  
project was concluded in 1988. Final  
editing of the documentation was  
completed in 1992.

**Historians:** Gray Fitzsimons, David Kelliher, and  
Timothy Whitakker, 1986.

Of the four spans crossing the Marseilles power canal, this Howe pony truss bridge, erected in 1888 by the Lassing Bridge Company of Chicago, is the most significant. It is not only one of the oldest surviving bridges in the area but its Howe truss configuration is somewhat unusual for late-nineteenth century bridge design. (The Pratt and Warren truss types dominated long-span bridge construction during this period.)

The Howe truss bridge was built to carry a single-track spur line of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad. It measures approximately 96' in length and is 20' wide. The combination steel and iron bridge contains riveted gusset plate connections and its structural members are composed of laced channels and angles. The nameplate reads: "1888, M. Lassing, Builder, Chicago, Illinois." Nearby, also carrying a Rock Island spur line across the Marseilles power canal is a single-span, Howe pony truss bridge, erected ca. 1900. It measures approximately 80' in length and is 20' wide. It is constructed of riveted plates, channels and lattice work.

**SOURCES:**

Dwight L. Agnew, "Beginning of the Rock Island Lines," State Historical Society Journal, v. 46 (1953): 407-24.

Sanborn Map Co. Marseilles, Illinois (New York: The Sanborn Map Co., 1889, 1898, 1907, 1913).